

The Commonwealth and FEMA Team Up to Increase Vaccination Administration in Boston

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and FEMA announce today a partnership to expand access to the COVID-19 vaccine by bringing 6,000 federal doses daily to the Hynes Convention Center vaccination site, for a total of 7,000 doses per day when combined with the state's current allocation.

This Community Vaccination Center (CVC) program will be open to the public, with additional services available for the most disproportionately impacted communities in Suffolk County, starting March 31.

People interested in booking an appointment at the Hynes Convention Center vaccination site should continue to pre-register at vaccinesignup.mass.gov. There will be no disruption to the appointment process with this federal expansion. The state will also coordinate additional community outreach to assist vulnerable residents with signups. Additionally, a portion of the federal doses will be designated for mobile units for areas of Suffolk County (Chelsea, Revere & Boston). The Baker-Polito Administration will provide more details on these efforts soon.

The Hynes Community Vaccination site will have interpreters available daily for individuals speaking Spanish, Mandarin, and Haitian/Creole, as well as capability to utilize telephonic translation with access to 240 different languages. The Hynes is centrally located and accessible via public transportation on the MBTA Green Line ('Hynes Convention Center Station,') ('Prudential Center Station'), the MBTA

Orange Line ('Back Bay Station' via passageways), the Commuter Rail, and major bus routes to ensure individuals with transportation challenges can access the site. Free parking is available for those with private transportation.

Additionally, MassHealth is offering new flexibilities for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation for members with access/functional needs to ensure equitable transportation access to and from the sites.

The Commonwealth, federal, and state contracted staff will be used to support the operations at this facility for the duration of 8 weeks. Along with staffing, FEMA and its federal partners will provide support through operations, logistics and vaccine allocations. The addition of the FEMA site and the resources that come with it will enable Massachusetts to further operationalize its commitment to equity, a core pillar of the state's vaccination plan, which includes \$27.4 million in CDC funding focused on the 20 communities hardest hit by COVID-19, including Boston. The state Department of Public Health is working in these cities and towns on customized plans to reduce barriers to vaccination and increase awareness and confidence in vaccine safety, joining with neighborhood health centers, local health departments, and community and faith based groups to increase vaccination.

How the Site was Selected

The Hynes site, like other federally supported sites across the country, was selected based on data analysis including the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index, population needs and challenges, and available public transit options to the center. Input from state and local partners was crucial in determining the location. The Hynes site will have a vaccination output of several thousand doses per day at maximum operating capacity. One thousand doses from the Commonwealth will be increased by an additional 6,000 doses from a separate federal allocation.

“Massachusetts is a national leader for vaccines and this additional support from the federal government will help to increase access and availability to some of our most disproportionately impacted communities,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “We are grateful for the support from the Biden-Harris Administration for selecting Massachusetts to host one of these sites and for the support of our congressional delegation in applying for this program.”

The Hynes Convention Center is a well-known destination within the Greater Boston community, having been in operation since 1968. It possesses all the critical infrastructure requirements and facilities such as running water, restrooms and parking to host thousands of individuals at a time, safely and comfortably.

“The goal of establishing these joint federal pilot centers is to continue to expand the rate of vaccinations in an efficient, effective and equitable manner, with an explicit focus on making sure communities with a high risk of COVID-19 exposure and infection are not left behind,” said Acting Region 1 Administrator and Federal Coordinating Officer Paul Ford, who oversees FEMA’s operations in New England. “FEMA remains committed to helping everyone in America during this time and we will continue to work with our partners to stop the spread of this disease.”